

Abstraction in Asia
from 1960 to Nowadays —
CHINA - JAPAN - KOREA



Galerie Vazieux
5bis rue du Louvre 75001 Paris
+33 (0)1 48 00 91 00 / +33 (0)6 60 05 14 57
www.vazieux.com

Formerly located in the Drouot district, Sabine Vazieux has just opened a new space at 5bis rue du Louvre, in the center of Paris and close to the future Pinault Foundation.

On the occasion of its opening, the gallery will present an inaugural exhibition of Chinese, Korean and Japanese abstract artists, in which Vazieux specialises.

Paintings from 1960 to nowadays by various Asian artists will be exhibited. These artists share a close connection with nature, with abstraction as a means to sublime it and give it an essence.

Despite originally coming from different countries, these artists do not only share this connection with nature, but also have in common Buddhist philosophy and ties to their pictorial traditions, that allow them to create an original Eastern abstraction, which has its own identity.

These artists, some considered as pioneers of abstraction in Asia, were rediscovered by Sabine Vazieux through her travels and research. They are mostly exhibited exclusively in her gallery while it is certainly an original idea and a rare opportunity to see them united in one exhibition.

ARTISTS:

China —

CHUANG CHE (1934)

FONG CHUNG-RAY (1933)

Japan —

YOKO MATSUMOTO (1936)

MASATOYO KISHI (1924 - 2017)

KENJIRO OKAZAKI (1955)

Korea —

OH SE YEOL (1945)

Chuang Che (1934)

A master in abstract landscape painting on canvas, poet and philosopher, the spirituality of his work follows the line of the great Chinese traditional artists. Chuang Che invented the 'Third Way', a unique artistic concept that sought to merge Asian and Western aesthetics. His abstract landscapes combined bright colours, a turbulence of forms, a sense of transparency, and various paint effects. Among these improbable chaos is a perfect harmony of joy and melancholy, from which emanates a sense of boundless freedom.

Born in Beijing in 1934, Chuang Che's father is a well-known calligrapher and curator of the Palace Museum in Peking, and played an active role in 1948 in the transfer of the Palace Museum's works to Taipei. Chuang Che was fourteen when this important event took place and he followed his family to Taiwan. Throughout his career, traditional Chinese painting has remained an inexhaustible source of inspiration.

Starting from 1954, he studied painting under Chu Teh-Chun at the department of Fine Arts of the National Taiwan Normal University. In 1958, he joined the "Fifth Moon" group, becoming one of its main participants. The Rockefeller Foundation sponsored his first trip to the United States in 1966. He spent six months in 1968 in France and met Zao Wou Ki and Chu Teh-Chun while he made the acquaintance of Antoni Tapiès in Spain.

Chuang Che settled in the United States for good in 1973. In 1992, the Taipei Fine Arts Museum presented a great retrospective of his work.



Chuang Che

Untitled, 1984

Oil and acrylic on canvas

Signed

126 x 191 cm



Chuang Che
The Great Rule, 1989
Oil and acrylic on canvas
Signed and dated
133 x 175 cm



Chuang Che

Virtual and Real, 1990

Ink on paper

Signed and dated on bottom left

64 x 94 cm

Fong Chong-Ray (1933)

Recognised as one of the pioneers of abstraction in Chinese paintings, the technique of collages and imprints have become fundamental aspects of Fong Chong-Ray's artistic practice. Backed with Buddhist spirituality and temporality, he has revived the spiritual essence from the paintings by the great old masters and invites the viewer to contemplate.

Born in China in the province of Henan, he became a Marine lieutenant at a young age. Political turmoil in his home country caused him to emigrate to Taiwan in 1949.

In Taipei, he studied art, and in 1958 he founded the "Four Seas Artists Association" in collaboration with Hu Chi Chong. In 1961, at the invitation of Liu Guosong, he became a member of the "Fifth Moon" group and participated in many exhibitions. During the same period, following Liu Guosong's advice, he gave up oil painting to return to the traditional Chinese techniques of brush and ink on paper. Fong Chung-Ray invented a brush made out of fibers taken from the trunks of palm trees, which gave a rawer aspect to his tints of colors.

In 1971, he received the Rockefeller Foundation prize that enabled him to travel to Europe and to the United States. He immigrated to San Francisco in 1975.



Fong Chung-Ray

Composition, 2014

Acrylic, ink, oil and collages on canvas

Signed and dated on bottom right

167 x 122 cm



Fong Chung-Ray
Untitled, 2017
Acrylic on canvas
107 x 181 cm

Yoko Matsumoto (1936)

An important contemporary Japanese artist, Yoko Matsumoto is known with her original unique style of abstract painting based on a pink colour scheme, which she developed and perfected during the 1980s and 1990s. From nuances of green and gray to black and pink, her art represents a relentless journey of exploring, expressing and freeing colours, with the help of dynamic light and composition.

Born in 1936 in Tokyo, Yoko Matsumoto developed her interest in drawing already when she was in kindergarten. In 1956-60 during her studies the Oil Painting Department of Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music, she got impressed by a novel based on a story of anatomy class called *Shisha no Ogori* (Lavish are the Dead) by Kenzaburo Oe. She incorporates images from the novel into her work which she paints for her graduation and uses pink as the core colour in her painting life afterwards. She graduated from the Oil Painting Department of Tokyo National University of Fine Arts and Music in 1960.

At the end of the 1960s while living in the United States, she discovered acrylic paint and became aware of new possibilities in painting. She went on to make effective use of this medium, perfecting an original style of abstract painting based on a pink colour scheme, in the 1980s and the 1990s.

In recent years, she has moved into new territory with a series of abstract oil paintings in green.



Yoko Matsumoto
Descending Light II, 1995
Acrylic on canvas
250 x 200 cm



Yoko Matsumoto

Shifting Slowly from Pink to White, 1992

Acrylic on canvas

190 x 223 cm



Yoko Matsumoto
Generation II, 1995
Acrylic on canvas
200 x 200 cm



Yoko Matsumoto
Shapes in Nature XI, 1992
Acrylic on canvas
130 x 194 cm

Masatoyo Kishi (1924-2017)

Abstract painter and sculptor Masatoyo Kishi is best known for mixing elements of traditional Japanese culture with Western abstraction. Recalling decorative motifs at first glance at his paintings, the dynamic between chaos and awe follows, while denoting the artist's interests in Zen Buddhism, Taoism, seventeenth-century Japanese architecture, and Western classical music.

Born in Sakai, Japan, in 1924, Masatoyo Kishi graduated from the Tokyo University of Science in 1953 with degrees in Physics and Mathematics. After a short career as a mathematics teacher, Kishi began exhibiting with Tekkei Kai, a group of abstract painters affiliated with the Kyoto Museum of Art. He said, "As a Japanese artist in the 1950s in Tokyo, I didn't go to art school. Japanese artists studied literature, economics, science; then you explored art."

During late 1950s and the 1960s, he created his Opus paintings, featuring softly dripped pigments and sweeping brushwork with large brushes. Kishi painted his works by laying canvases horizontally and using wooden sticks to drip paint onto them, which for him is "an orderly conversation between me and the canvas."

Kishi moved from Japan in 1960 to San Francisco, where he showed with the Bolles Gallery and also taught at Holy Names College in Oakland and Dominican College in San Rafael. Over the course of nearly thirty years there until 1988, he transitioned from primarily painting to sculpting.



Masatoyo Kishi

OPUS 68 K 1, 1968

Oil on canvas

Signed and dated on the back

102 x 164 cm



Masatoyo Kishi

OPUS 67-1-3, 1967

Oil on panel

Signed and dated on the back

53 x 198 cm

Kenjiro Okazaki (1955)

One of the catalysts of contemporary abstraction in Japan, Kenjiro Okazaki has been recognized as one of the intellectual giants of the Japanese art scene since his debut in the 1980s. With impasto of vibrant and contrasting colours in diverse forms and compositions, some of his works present harmonious dialogues while others challenge the viewer with powerful vibrations and mixed emotions.

Born in Tokyo in 1955, Kenjiro Okazaki is an artist and theorist, whose works span over several genres, including painting, sculpture, as well as landscape design and architecture. His work employs an architectural context to explore constantly shifting realms of expression, including painting, sculpture, landscape design, and other fields.

In 2002, he was director of the Japanese pavilion at the 8th International Architecture Exhibition. His works include a collaborative performance *I Love my Robots* with the choreographer Trisha Brown, premiered in early 2007. He received Smithsonian Artist Research Fellowship at Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden (HMSG) in 2014.

Okazaki is also extremely active as a theoretician and critic, and is the author or co-author of several books, including *Renaissance: Condition of Experience* (Bunshun Gakugei Library), featuring his analysis of Filippo Brunelleschi.

He is currently a professor at and deputy director of the Kinki University International Center for Human Sciences.



Kenjiro Okazaki

Title, 2018

Acrylic on canvas

160 x 130 cm



Kenjiro Okazaki

Title?, 2018

Acrylic on canvas

160 x 130 cm

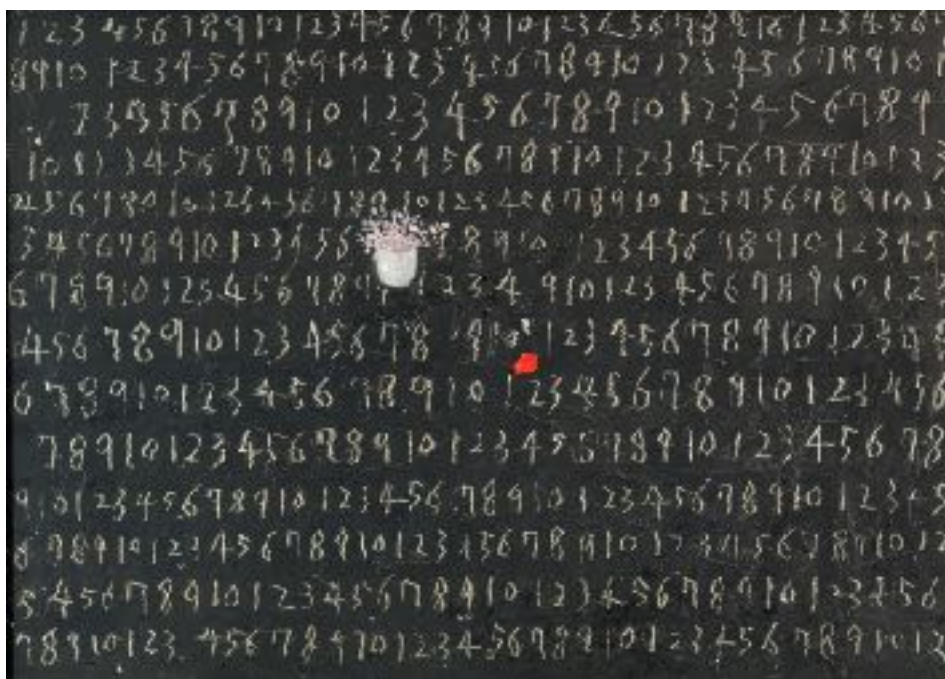
Oh Se-Yeol (1945)

Oh Se-Yeol is a representative contemporary artist from South Korea demonstrating unique style and multi-techniques. Providing a mystical, child-like ambiance, his paintings consist of multiple layers of matter, arousing a faint sense of longing and exuding a tranquil energy and the power to comfort.

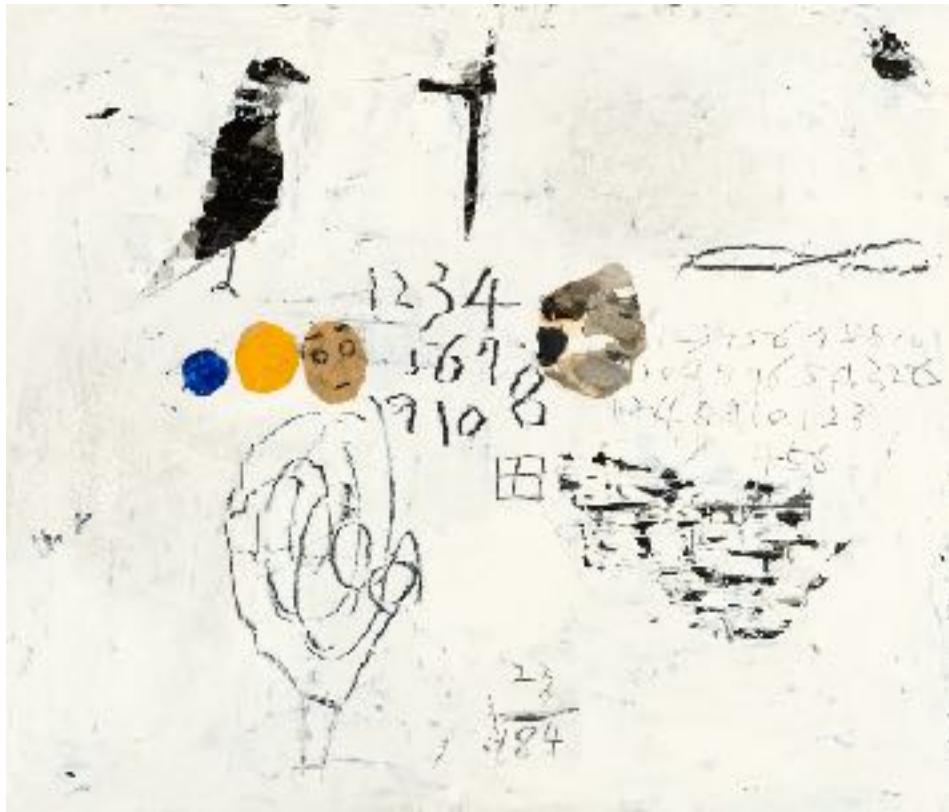
Born in Seoul, Oh Se-Yeol attended Seorabol Art College in 1969 and received his M.F.A. in Chung-Ang University, the Graduate School of Art in 1974. In 2016, his touring solo exhibition 'The Layers of Memory' travelled from Paris to Brussels and from London to Shanghai.

Oh Se-Yeol works in a labor-intensive technique; painting numerous layers over the canvas and scraping off the surface with a sharp object repeatedly, to understand the lives of laborers and console the exhausted contemporary humanity. Another feature is that he paints more often on a solid wooden panel than on a canvas. He uses various materials such as oil paint, acrylic paint, conte, gouache, etc. With sketches or planning beforehand, he works spontaneously.

Oh Se-Yeol generally uses monotone background colours in his works, juxtaposing on top with randomly placed symbols or objects, sometimes insignificant numbers, which can be seen as visual illustrations of memory fragments — he makes use of poetic language and symbolism in his art.



Oh Se Yeol
Untitled, 2018
Mixed media
91 x 73 cm



Oh Se Yeol
Untitled, 2018
Mixed Media
53 x 45.5 cm



Oh Se Yeol
Untitled, 2018
Mixed Media
60.6 x 72.7 cm

Press contact:

Rickovia Leung

contact@vazieux.com

+33 (0)1 48 00 91 00 / +33 (0)6 25 23 72 88



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